

Sikhism- Struggle of Gurus against Mughal Empire of India

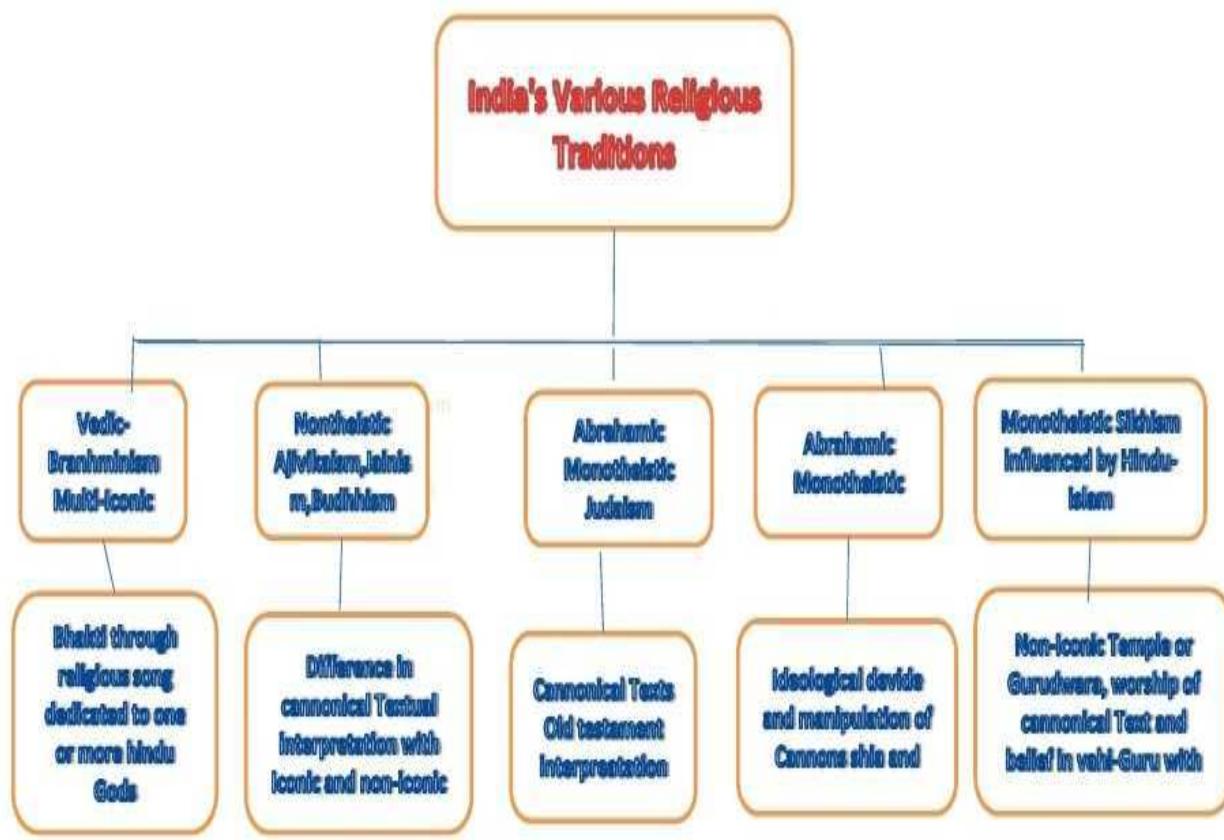
By: Bipin Shah

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Introduction- Religions Of India:

India has been the home of various religious thoughts for millennium. Anyone, who proposes to claim otherwise do not comprehend the history of India and Hindu's tolerance of other religious thoughts and practices contrary to theirs for the thousands of years. The people who are making such claims are bogus. Instead, we find the greatest religious intolerance exists outside of India. They are found in the form of virulent form of Sunni Islam driven and exploited by ruling classes to serve their political agenda. The claims of intolerance by Hindu are politically motivated and driven by vested lobbying interest. When you carefully chart various traditions that exist in India, it proves high degree of tolerance as shown below.



This does not include many other sects like Parsee, Ishmael who practice off mainstream traditions. There are local deities and traditions native to aborigines of India.

We have a rainbow spectrum of ancient religions with full freedom of worships ranging from Brahminical- Vedic, Hindu Iconic worships, Abrahamic monotheistic -Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Nontheistic- Jainism and Buddhism. India also have Islam influenced derivative religions like Sikhism, Sthanakvasi and Terapanthi Jainism and Ismail community who do not use icons but teachers are there to guide and preach the theology including recitation of spiritual texts. Kabirism and Hare Krishna Bhakti movement are devoted to singing religious songs and prayers in a commune environment. Then, we have Zoroasterism on the style of Vedic religion with worship of fire and their canonical texts. We also have numerous derivative sects that have the short shelf life (Guru Centric) and at times are exported outside of India as novelties such as Rajnishis, Maharishi, Saibaba, Syayadhy and Hare Krishna. The basic differences among all can be summarized this following way:

1. Believe in one God with no iconic worship.
2. Believe in multiple Gods and divinities with iconic depiction and worship.
3. Believe in no God but work for spiritual enhancement and ultimate liberation with or Without the Iconic worship.
4. Dedicate yourself in meditation and prayer to non-iconic God, divinity, Teacher or cult.

India probably is one of the rare countries that offers wide variety of religious menu and full freedom of worship and protects the individual rights to religious worships. We wrote introductory article on reformist religions of India sometimes ago. This article concentrates on 15th century AD religious renaissance of India when Islamic Influence (good part) fused with some of the prevailing religious tradition and became a derivative religion without the presence of Idol worshipping. Sikhism, Sthanakvasi and Terapanthi Jainism are good examples along with Sufism sects of Islam that borrowed some pages from India's religion without iconic presence. My earlier publication touches on that subject.

[https://www.academia.edu/6965530/The influence of Islam on Reformist Religious Movements of Medieval India Shikhism and Bhakti Movement](https://www.academia.edu/6965530/The_influence_of_Islam_on_Reformist_Religious_Movements_of_Medieval_India_Shikhism_and_Bhakti_Movement)

When one religious sect tries to impose their religious views on others such as hard core Wahhabi- Derabandi form of Islam, others are bound to resist. The recent events in Iraq by ISIS are the demonstration of virulent form of Islam that needs to be eradicated from the face of this planet. When certain events unfolded during the Mughal period, Mughal Empire experienced a total collapse and the recent convergence of events indicates the final outcome will be self-destructive for those who employ violence as tool to forcibly convert

people. This articles deal with Sikhism, their great Gurus who fought for their religion. We will have to further include another chapter on Raja Ranjit singh who founded a Sikh empire. Today, large number of brave Sikh soldiers defends India's border securities and for that the nation remains grateful.

Prehistory of Sikhs:

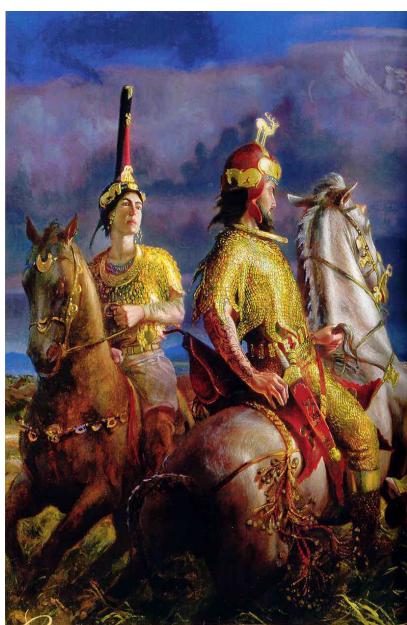
Sikh community is made up of various castes such as Khatri, Jats and Gujjar and others. Each has their own version of the origin of their history. Herodotus, the Greek historian first coined the word "Scythian" in generic terms to define the tribes of central Asia but it was so broad based and generic that included many tribes and sub tribes of central Asia. Mahabharata and Persian defined them with little more precision by the terms as Kamboj, Pahlva, saka, Sacai, Pishacha, Yavanas, Massagetae, Gete etc. and broke them down in various tribal -ethnic groups. The Persian called the neighboring group as Sacai and Indians called them Saka. The ancient Scythians as described by Herodotus were a collection of related nomadic tribes who inhabited the vast steppes (prairies) of Central Asia. They are the product of the inter-marriage of mongoloids and Caucasoid group. Though culturally cohesive, the genetic admixture changed as one traversed from east to west through Central Asian steppe. Linguistically, they fit into Indo-European group except Turk, Tatar and Mongols.



Scythic land as described by Herodotus 6th century BC Greek historians



Geta and Massagetae (Rajput and Sikh-Jats)



Early Sakas with conical hats



Saka-Kamboja as a horse trainer



early Sikh Jat Girl

They were distinguished by very strong tribal ties and fiercely independent females. Their religion involved various natural entities. A warrior race who can shoot the arrow while riding backward have been mischaracterized through the course of the ancient history. At times, they have been demonized in European History as barbarians. Now, they have been disappeared from the pages of history except when archeological discovery brings out old Scythian graves. They were mercenaries for hire for Median Empire, Achemenians Empire and

even during Mahabharata war. They travelled fast with their horses. The Persepolis relief gives us some idea of this Sacai or saka people that lived in India-Iran borderlands. Over the centuries, they settled in India, Persia and Baltic lands. They were designated as Kshatriya of Non-Vedic types during Janapada period and also served Persian army of Cyrus the Great during its western campaign.

The Sub clans of Saka called Massageta and Gete have settled in India since Achemenians conquest of Aratta, Afghanistan, Makran, sindh and Punjab. Most of these clans who migrated to India were in Indian cultural influence zones so they got easily assimilated into Vedic and Janapadic India. The Indian genetic data shows complex admixture of various ancient tribes and ethnicities. It can be easily inferred that Modern Sikhs, Jats, Sindhis, Rajputs and Khokhar of the subcontinents owe their heritage and war like spirits to these early professional warrior group of Central Asia.

Sikh-Jat tribes adopted Hinduism but fiercely retained their tribal customs. If one travels in Sikh Jat villages one is struck by the persistence of cultural costumes and traditions that very different than Vedic Hindu tradition of India. The Sikh Jat build is unique, very tall in statures, light golden brown skin color, and children who have a tawny Red-blonde hair color until they are about two years old. This is a give-away of Scythian racial heritage. The ancient Aryans possessed the dark hair.

The arrival of Islam in the subcontinent did more damage to this proud people than anything that happened in the past history. The forcible conversions of Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs and Hindus in Northern India led to many people converting to Islam due to social pressure, material inducements or plain physical coercion.

The religious renaissance blunt the Islamic conversion as Islam lost its argument against the worshipping of Idols. The majority of Hindu Jat clans adopted Sikhism voluntarily to escape Islamic conversion when Guru Nanak established the Sikhism. He charted a middle road so Muslim can view him as Sufi saint (Fakir) and Hindu can view him as a Hindu sage.

The conversion process was very simple. The Clan Chief or eldest member of the family changed his religion to Sikhism while other family members continue to practice whatever the religion they preferred either Hinduism or Muslim. The development of Khalsa tradition gave a further impetus to the new brand identity of the religion. The Sikhism was designed by Guru Nanak and other Gurus to be the bridge between Hindu and Muslims by developing an unique identity and for that they succeeded.

Khatri (Kshatriya) Caste:

Khatri is a reading caste from the northern Indian subcontinent. Khatri is derived from word Kshatriya are mostly found in Punjab but they are also found in other regions of India. As a mercantile caste Khatri played an important role in India's transregional and silk trade during the Mughal period. They adopted administrative and military roles outside the Punjab region as well. Mr. Scott Cameron Levi describes the Khatri caste as a merchant community of early India. Similarly the Marwari, Kuchhi, Sindhi and Gujarati are also belonged to mercantile class. Some historians equate Khatri to Brahm-Kshatriya meaning mixture of Brahmin and Kshatriya.

Jats and Gujjars:

The Jat and Gujjar people assumed to have a similar origin from central Asia with scythic background just like Rajputs. Therefore, Rajputs and Khatri (sometime assumed to be Brahm-Khatri) are also considered to be of scythic background. While Jat can be descended from Gate and Rajput from Massa Gate, both tribes of Indo Saka groups are described by Herodotus of 6th century BC as Scythians due to similarity of the culture. They were warriors on demand but also pastoralist and agriculturalist of the later period. They could have left central Asia in the series of migratory waves from earlier than Achemenians conquest of Gandhara, Punjab, Northern Afghanistan to Aratta, and to later push by great Yuezhi (Kushan) driven migration through entire central Asia and also later destabilizing Islamic conquest of Hindu Turki Shahi kingdom of Afghanistan and Bactria. They may have entered through Afghanistan to Sindh then spread southwards towards Rajasthan and Gujarat and also westward towards swat valley to Punjab. All these communities are intermixed as per recent DNA analysis. They now follow various faiths of Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu religions. They are spread out widely in the modern Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and the Pakistani provinces of Sindh and Punjab. According Metcalf:

“ The Upstart warriors, Rajputs, Marathas, Jats, Khatri and the like, as coherent social groups with military and governing ideals, were themselves a product of the Muslim invasion, they recognized them due to their fierce resistance and ultimately used them as a part of the conquering force with military and governing experience. Their Mughal and Delhi sultanate would not have lasted as long as they did with their inclusion in their military structure.”

“All the Sikh Gurus were Khatri.” In addition to their mercantile skill, Nath describes Khatri a warlike race, a claim further supported by their employment as soldiers by Muslim rulers of India.

Shikhism:

Admittedly, Punjab and Kashmir were the front line Border States and had to withstand the various invasions from Mongol, Moguls, Huns, Turks and Afghans. Most of them were driven by 6th century violent surge of Islam. Other invasions were temporary and those who were left behind the prevailing religious tradition of India and were reabsorbed in the society. The history of Sikhism is closely associated with the history of Punjab and the socio-political situation in medieval India created by Islam and its political ideology. The socio-political effects were accentuated since the rise of Aurungzeb to power. The Delhi sultanate were more focused on subduing the Rajput states and Gujarat, all though active in other areas did not significantly affected every level of citizenry like farmers and workers who barely survived from tiling the soil. Guru Nanak was the first Guru who founded the Sikhism as per Sikhism's history.

Sikhism in anglicized version derives from the Punjabi word Sikhi. We suspect that the word was meant to be Sidhhi (Sadhu) who are knowledgeable. As alternate world used in Gurudwara is also "Gayani", meaning knowledgeable of the religion. Sikhism as part of religious renaissance of India of 15th century AD (along with idol less Jainism and Bhakti movements) continued through ten successive Gurus and eleventh being the Guru Granth sahib the canonical text.

Brief Introduction of the Sikhism's founder Guru Nanak:

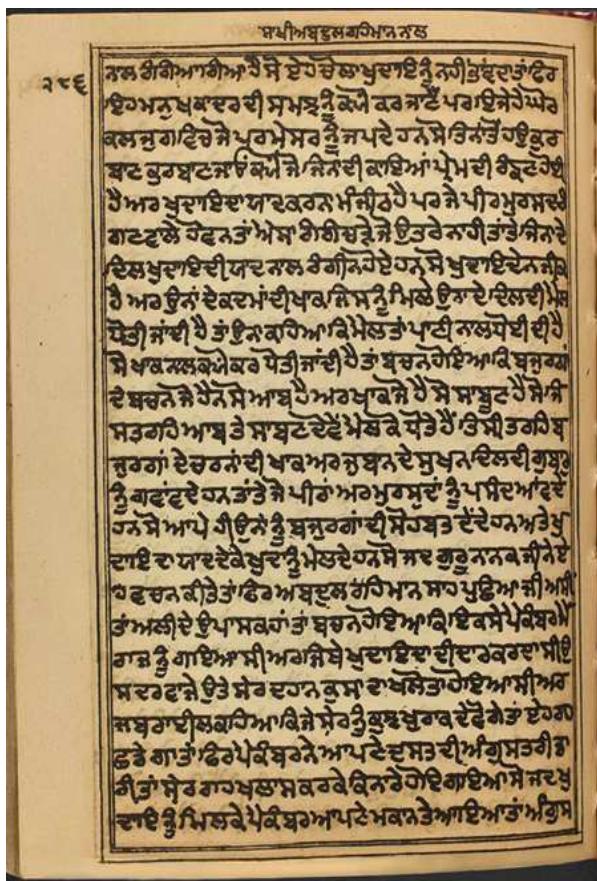
Guru Nanak was born near Lahore; his father was employed by Muslim landlord. His story has some similarities with Lonka Shah who established Sthanakvasi sect of Jainism where the purpose was to reject the idol worship practiced by other Hindu religions.

Nanak was born of Hindu family but was raised in Islamic household and during his early employment was very much connected and influenced by Islam. M.H. Court who translated the biographical work collected by B. Lyall in Gurumukhi and translated by an English colonel that was finally published in English book called "The history of Sikhs" add the following to Guru Nanak's account of life:

"A son was born to kalu (Hindu family) in 1469 AD, who was named Nanak. After he grew to teen age, His father decided to send him to his sister Nanaki's house for learning the business whose husband was a Patidar, named Rai Bullar who may have adopted Islam at some point in his life but he managed to found him the Job under Daulat Khan Lodhi, then Governor of Punjab. In 1544 AD, he married the daughter of Mulla Chona Khatri. After few years after his

son's birth, he became Fakir (Muslim equivalent of saint or sage). Later after his travel, Bairam Khan Lodhi, the son of Sikandar took the place of former governor of Punjab. Nanak was no longer worked for Lodhi. Up on hearing that Nanak neither followed Islam or Hinduism, Nanak was summoned to appear before him and Nanak would not budge on his principle and therefore he was jailed but he was released by Babur after Lodhi were defeated."

The early biographical sketch narrates his brilliance of the mind, his awareness and alertness. He was exposed to Persian and Arabic languages. The Islam is bound to influence him due to his work and life environment. Like all Abrahamic faiths including Islam he started believing in one God concept. Other childhood accounts refer to strange and miraculous events about Nanak.



Nanak's Janamsakhi in Gurumukhi



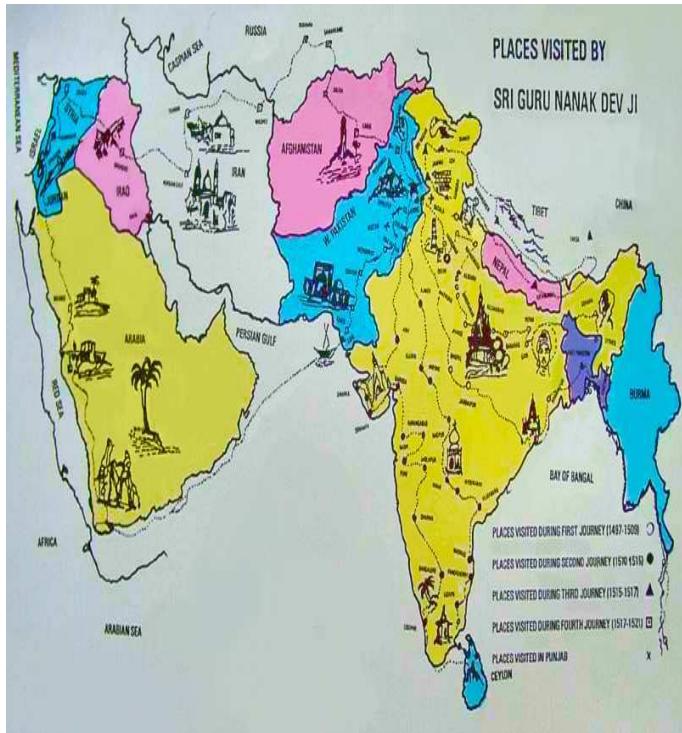
Nanak shrine in Pakistan

Rai Bulhar a landlord and Nanak's sister, Bibi Nanaki was the first people who recognized divine qualities in the boy. They encouraged and supported him to study and travel. Sikh tradition states that at around 1499 AD, at the age of 30, he had a vision for self purification.

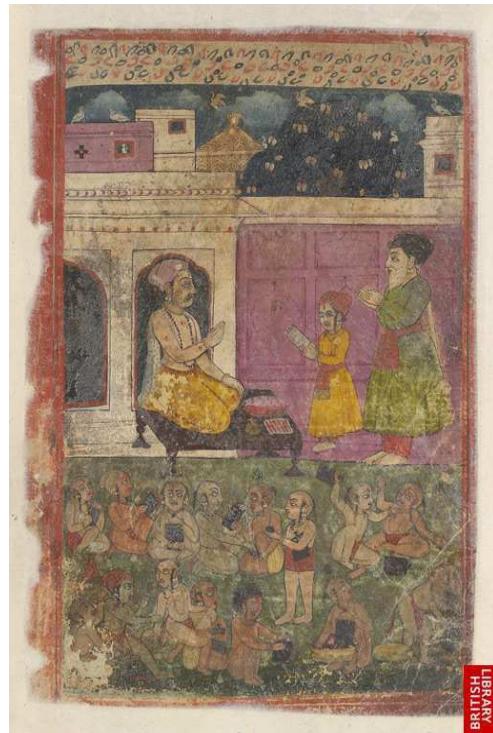
He announced he will not follow either Hindu or Muslim path but he will follow his God's path. In his divine vision he was offered a cup of "Amrit" by God and was directed to go back and spread God's message. "**Whoever rejoices you will receive my favor.**" From this point forward Sikhism was born and Nanak's God is called "Vahi guru" and he himself became a Guru or status equivalent to a prophet. Rai Bulhar was a Hindu Jamindar who adopted Islam, Nanak's sister probably was married to Muslim as the word "Bibi" implies the Hindu conversion to Islam was not uncommon in 15th century AD. Nanak's journey is testament to his belief in Universal brotherhood and the stipulation here of his exposure to both the religions.

There is not a total consensus as to his travel ternaries as to why a Hindu boy would travel to dangerous Arabian Peninsula by sea as an Idolater there are clues of his association with both Hindu and moslem friends and relatives and that protected him. He is widely acknowledged to have made four major journeys, spanning thousands of miles covering north east india that was controlled by Lodi governor and then to Sri Lanka, the another one to North west to Kashmir, Ladakh, and Tibet, and the final tour west towards Mecca and Medina. It appears from the biography, that in his early years he was associated with Lodi who was the governor of North east and Punjab and as a personal attendant he did have an opportunity to travel with him to Medina and Mecca as an attendant while Lodhi was in Hazz pilgrimage. It appears that through his travel he developed extensive knowledge of the world's religions and decided to start on his own. This was the age of religious renaissance in India. The people may have thought that the prayers to Hindu Gods were not answered to blunt the expansion and cruelties of Delhi Sultanate when mass conversion, slavery and massacre of Hindu took place in the name of jihad. Around the same time in Gujarat, a Swetambra, idol worshipping sect of Jaina branched out in Ahmadabad to start a new sect called Sthanakvasi (without Idol). When Hinduism was compressed and oppressed by Islam, the people found alternate ways to escape conversion and other discriminatory levies and Taxes imposed on the idolaters. Jains were from mercantile class so less taxes is better for them. It is hard to predict what inspired Guru Nanak to take a middle course.

There is one thing common among Muslims, Sthanakvasi Jain, Nazarene Jews and Sikhs is their white color dress during religious prayers and rituals. That should give the readers some clues to the mystery of similarities in dress code. Kabirism took the same approach, songs and prayer without the icon. It appears from historical records that early moguls accepted these religious sects along with Shia sect and remove those discriminatory religious taxes.



Guru Nanak's Travel to India and Mecca



Raised as Hindu Nanak goes to school

Nanak was truly a divine and a good person. He must have seen the suffering, religious bigotry, hates, fanaticism, falsehood and hypocrisy. So he decided not to join any established religion but start his own and act as bridge and spread the message of peace, love and harmony from almighty God. He preached the message of truth, compassion, universal brotherhood and righteousness. Nanak knew that ancient Jamindari amounted to virtual slavery and bonded labor. Under Muslim rule, most of the Jamindar were Muslim aristocrats or converted Hindu. The first Guru established the system of the Langar (communal kitchen), in order to demonstrate the need to share and have equality between all people. Nanak also believed that all religious traditions are equally valid and capable of enlightening one's Saul. He believed in practicing what he preached. His example of the life he lived and what he preached attracted number of disfranchised followers who found no hopes in returning to their ancestor's religion completely but a middle course will restore the harmony and peacefulness among two competing traditions prevailing in Punjab, that was Hindu vs. Islam.

We must recognize that strategic mistakes committed by early Hindu rulers that cost Hindu nation dearly and the border states took the hardest hit from uninvited invaders and we are still struggling to understand the full impact to continuity of our ancestors' traditions and

beliefs. Once in early history, India was the beacon of spirituality and wisdom. Many ancient travelers came to India to learn the truth and wisdom until Islam arrived.



Guru Nanak of India, Sikh prophet of righteousness, compassion and universal brotherhood (1469-1539 AD)

Once you are inducted in to the Sikh religion, the man assumes the name of "Singh" (Lion), and woman will carry the epithet of "Kaur" (Princess), very typical of Rajput and both of them have scythic ancestry. After the initiation or induction Known in Punjabi as (khande-kī-Pahul), every Sikhs pledged to keeping the vows to keep Five "K"s: 1. Keshun (not to shave beard and wear turban to cover hair) or beard; 2. Kada (a iron/steel bracelet on the wrist); 3. Kirpan, (a sword tucked in the belt around waist); 4. Kachehra,(a cotton undergarment); and 5. Kanga, (a small wooden comb). While visiting their temple or Gurudwara, one must cover their hair with a turban or head scarf. Guru Nanak died on September 22, 1539 AD at Kartarpur that is now part of Pakistan. He settled at Karatpur as a peasant farmer but lived the life of a sage after attaining the self revelation and establishment of his sect. Since his biography was compiled later after his death, there may be some gaps as to his travels, the relationship with Lodhi Afghan governor of Punjab and the influence of Islam and his final rejection of Hinduism and Islam and his decision to carve out a separate religion that can be best described as the middle of Jainism/Buddhism and Abrahamic faith of middle east (Judaism and Islam). Guru Nanak's biography does say that "**In 1485 AD, he took up, at the instance of his brother-in-law, the appointment of an official in charge of the stores (Modi or Kothari) of Daulat Khan Lodhi, the Muslim Governor of the area at Sultanpur. It is there that**

he came into contact with Mardana, a Muslim minstrel (Mirasi), a singer and a poet.” His religious doctrine on one hand rejected icon worship and he also rejected metaphysics of Jainism and Buddhism but concentrated in universal brotherhood of love and compassion for all. His pragmatic approach towards life and prevailing circumstances in India may have contributed to the bridge that divided Hindu and Muslim. Guru’s genealogy is given below:

The First Guru:	Guru Nanak	(1469 to 1539 AD)
The Second Guru:	Guru Angad	(1504 to 1552 AD)
The Third Guru:	Guru Amar Das	(1479 to 1574 AD)
The Fourth Guru:	Guru Ram Das	(1534 to 1581AD)
The Fifth Guru:	Guru Arjan	(1563 to 1606AD)
The Sixth Guru:	Guru Hargobind	(1595 to 1644AD)
The Seventh Guru:	Guru Har Rai	(1630 to 1661AD)
The Eighth Guru:	Guru Harkrishan	(1656 to 1664AD)
The Ninth Guru:	Guru Teghh Bahadur	(1621 to 1675AD)
The Tenth Guru:	Guru Gobind Singh	(1666 to 1708AD)

There were many important historical figures of Sikhism and impossible to cover all of them in one single article but more will be added with sufficient details. We will cover those immortal Guru, Prophets and sages of Sikhism who sacrificed their lives to raise the spiritual renaissance. We will need to write under separate cover the adventure and conquest of Raja Ranjit Singh.

Guru Amar Das and King Akbar

Akbar was the first Mughal monarch that showed interest in India's various religious traditions. He met Jain Acharya Hiravijayji Sinh, a Tappa Gachha leader and third Sikh Guru Amar Dasji. Akbar in some way can be compared with King Asoka Maurya. In their early life they engaged themselves in violent wars and during the later stage of their life they turned pacifist. Akbar undoubtedly was impressed with the Sikh Guru's sensible preaching in bridging the Hindu-Muslim divide. In the year 1569 AD, Akbar decided to visit Punjab and requested the meeting with the Guru Amardasji. Guru held no peasantry or special arrangements and treated Akbar as a human being. Guru said:

“The Guru's place is open to all. The king and his subjects, the Hindus and the Muslims, the rich and the poor are all equal here. So Akbar will be welcomed like all other visitors to the Guru's place and special arrangements need not be made. The Caste or class has no power in

the next world; only the humble are exalted there. It is only the good who are honored for good acts." (Guru Nanak (SGGS p469)).

The Emperor came for a visit with the Rajah of Haripur to Goindwal where the Guru Amardas lived. The Guru and a few Sikhs received them warmly. They were shown round the place. Akbar was interested to know how the Guru's Langar was run. Simple food was served to all in the Guru's Langar. It remained open day and night. The Travelers, beggars, and strangers, as well as the followers of the Guru, were all served with food. Whatever was left was thrown to the cattle and birds so that nothing was wasted. The Guru had given an order that all persons coming to visit his place must have their food in the Langar (when hungry). There they were to sit in rows (Pangat) as equals and were to be served simple food in turn. Akbar and the Rajah of Haripur took their meals in the Guru's Langar. They sat among the common people in a row as the Sikhs served them food. They enjoyed the simple food and were very happy. Akbar liked the working of the Guru's Langar very much. **So, pleased was Akbar, he stated that "Emperor is impressed with your teaching and religion; the emperor would like to make a grant of land for running the Langar. Do I have your permission?"**

To Akbar's surprise, The Guruji replied "**Dear Emperor, I am very glad you like the path of Guru Nanak. I am also grateful for your offer of a grant of land for the Langar, but I am so sorry, I cannot accept it because the all the Gurus like to work hard to earn their keeps through their teachings and donations they receive with the religious work (Kirt Karni) and to share their proceeds (Wand Chakna) with others, by way of giving something in a way of running a Langar to help needy."**

Akbar accepted the Guru's idea but he had made up his mind so he presented the land of Amritsar to Bhani the daughter of Guru Amar Das as gift in her marriage. In 1574 AD, in the final days of Guru Amardasji, Guru Ram Dasji took over the responsibility temporarily. There were family member rivalries during Guru Arjanji' time and his succession. The details are available in the book "History of Sikh" and various sources.

Jahangir and Guru Arjan's Death:

The most likely circumstances of Guru Arjan's death point to the governor named chandu Shah who conspired with Arjan's brother to manipulate and frame the evidence against Guru Arjan Dev.

Akbar was highly displeased with his son Jehangir (Salim) as scandalous and incompetent son. Akbar's inclination was for his Grandson Khosrau to succeed him that Jehangir foiled. Khosrau went to Guru Arjan for his blessing but Jehangir considered it an offense against him. Chandu Shah filled Jahangir's mind with seeds of suspicion.

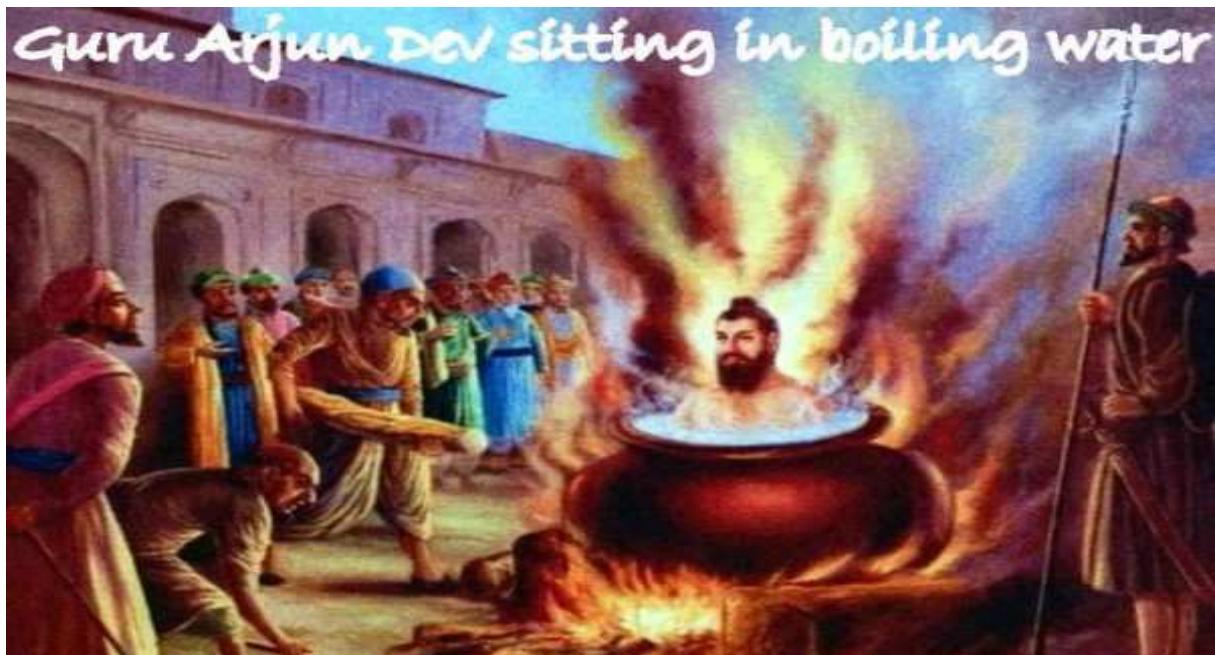
Guru Arjan was summoned to Lahore to meet with Jahangir. Guru Arjan was arrested on the charge that he had received and blessed the rebel prince's Khosrau that he denied. Guru Arjan, a non-violent man, was unaware of the court intrigues in Delhi merely given his blessings to Khosrau on his visit but took no part in the prince's plan.

Jahangir levied a fine of 2 lakh of rupees and told the Guru to remove all references to the Muslim and Hindu religions from the Holy Granth Sahib. Guru Arjan refused to pay the fine or to alter the Holy words in praise of God. Jehangir imprisoned him and tortured him. Although his followers were willing to raise the fine and try to free him, the Guru's mind was made up. The treacherous Chandu Shah with the help of Arjan's Brother thus succeeded in eliminating Guru. Mian Mir, the Sufi Saint tried to intervene on behalf of Guru Arjan but Guru asked him not to interfere in God's workings, which things would end as God intended. After Guru's death, Sikh followers' fury turned against chandu shah. Chandu Shah was dragged through the streets of Lahore by the angry Sikhs who had witnessed the atrocities perpetrated against their beloved Guru. Chandu Shah died a miserable death that he deserved. Murtaza Khan then succeeded the governor of Lahore.

There are controversial claims as how Arjun Devji died. Some say he died natural death and some say he was killed by Jehangir, while other say he was killed and tortured by Chandu shah, the governor of Lahore due to old spats on arrangement of matrimonial alliance. Arjun Devji's brother conspired with chandu shah due to denial of Guru Ship. Chandu shah was a wealthy banker and revenue official at the Mughal court at Lahore, and was from the upper-caste Hindu. There was a matrimonial spat going on between Guru Arjan and the governor regarding his daughter's matrimonial alliance. First the governor Chandu shah accepted it then rejected it with some disparaging remarks about Guru and then he could not marry his aging daughter on his own, he approach again to marry her off to Guru Har Gobind that Guru Arjan refused.

A contemporary Jesuit account, written in 1606 AD by Father Jerome Xavier, who was in Lahore at the time of Guru Arjan records that the Sikhs managed to get Jahangir to commute the death sentence to a heavy fine, for which a rich individual, possibly a Sikh, stood as guarantor. The Guru however refused to let a fine be paid for him and even refused when a

longtime friend of his, Sufi saint Mian Mir, tried interceding on his behalf. Jahangir tortured Guru Arjan in the hopes of extracting the money, but the Guru refused to give in and so attained martyrdom. The other near-contemporary non-Sikh source, a 1640s chronicle probably written by a Parsi, supports this view.



Guru Arjan's death

Gurdas was a contemporary of Guru Arjan and a Sikh chronicler recorded his death in the 1740 AD. Chaupa Singh, another close confidant of Guru Gobind Singh placed the entire blame on Chandu Shah, a Hindu official in Lahore, who Chaupa Singh accused of having the Guru arrested and executed after he turned down Chandu Shah's offer of marriage between Chandu's daughter and Guru Hargobind.

The death of a holy man roused such anger and anguish among Sikhs that gave a permanent flip to this religion where spirituality with militant color coexisted through remainder of the history. The pain of the Sikh community was felt among other communities that their master was mercilessly tortured to death. The grueling detail of his torture points to sickening mentality of militant Islam. "The fifth Guru was made to sit on big hot ferrous bread-baking plates and the burning sands from a parcher's furnace were poured on his bare body. After such inhuman tortures, the Guru was taken to the river 'Ravi' for a bath where he was said to have mysteriously disappeared into the River. All this was too much for the Sikhs. The blood-curdling tortures meted out on their beloved Guru made their blood boil. This martial race of scythic origin was insulted and humiliated. This sets the stage for Mughals- Sikhs war in the

future. Guru Hargobind Singh ji followed Guru Ship after Guru Arjan singh ji as 6th Guru of Sikhism.

Guru Hargobind Singh and Jahnagir:

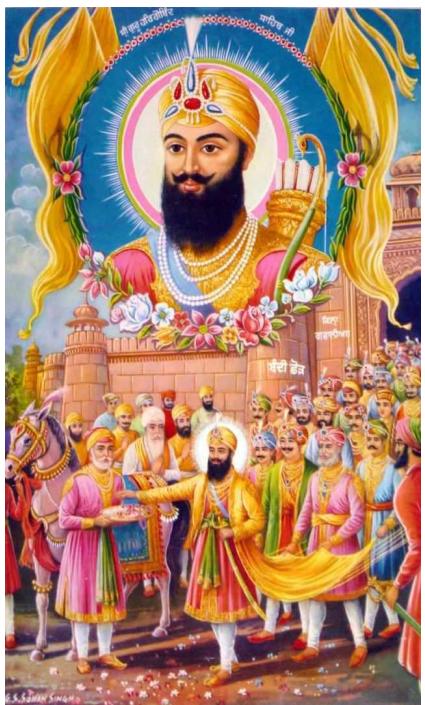
Guru Har Gobind was born on July 5th 1595 and died on March 19th 1644 AD. He was the sixth of the ten gurus and became Guru on 25 May 1606 following the footsteps of his father Guru Arjan Dev in spite of rival claim of Guru Ship by his uncle. He was not, perhaps, more than eleven before his ascension, he nominated Guru Har Rai, his grandson as the next Guru of the Sikhs. He carried two swords:

1. Indicating his spiritual authority (Piri) and
2. Indicating his temporal authority (Miri).

He built the Akal Takht, the Throne of the Almighty. This Guru Har Gobind ji excelled in matters of state, and his court was noted for its splendor. The arming and training of some of his devoted followers began; the Guru came to possess seven hundred horses, and his army "Risaldari" grew to three hundred horsemen and sixty gunners in the due course of time. Additionally, five hundred men from the Majha area of the Punjab were recruited as infantry. Guru Har Gobind built a fortress at Amritsar called Lohgarh "Fortress of steel". He had his own flag and war-drum which was beaten twice a day. This is a sign of conversion from early focus on religion to defense of their faith by might of the swords in view of Mughal's dominance and atrocities. Guru Hargobind himself was a brilliant martial artist and encouraged his followers to maintain physical fitness for combat when necessary.

Sikhism had developed its organization mostly during the tolerant days of Akbar. Akbar had never interfered with the development of the Sikhism and the way of developing the spirituality and relationship to God. After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind started developing military ability initially for defensive purpose. Guru Hargobind gradually accumulated a stable of eight hundred horses and three hundred mounted followers. A constant companion guard of fifty six protected him. This seed of hatred was sewn with their beloved Guru Arjan Dasji and it will not extinguish the fires of revenge against deceptive Islamic ruler and his henchmen. Turks, Tatars or Timuroid, hybrid human products of Turks and Mongols in the history were deceptive and untrustworthy people. They never kept their promises and trust between them and others were eroded rapidly. Ottoman Turks, another branch exhibited similar characteristics.

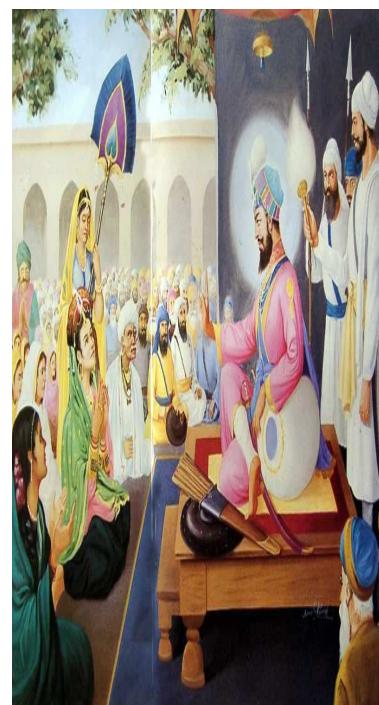
As expected this interfered with Military system of Mughals, so Jahangir could not tolerate the armed policy of Guru Hargobind and consequently imprisoned him. The main reason for his release after years of imprisonment was that there were a lot of reports from across the entire country that people were turning against the throne both Hindu and Muslim alike due to the popularity of the guru himself, as well as the unjustified martyrdom of the fifth guru Arjan. Lots of Muslims were crossing the line and were joining the Sikhism. The rumors were in air of the military coup against Jehangir. In order to save his throne, he decided to release him. There were also 52 Hindu kings sitting in Gwalior prison.



Guru Hargobind' release



Dying Painde khan



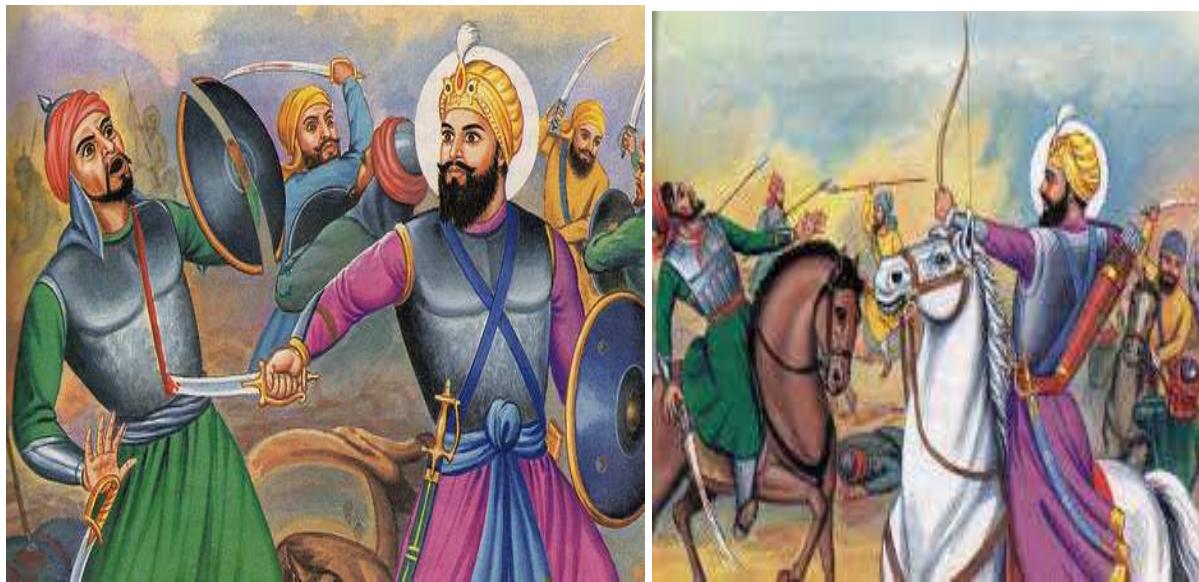
Noor Jahan's meeting with Guru

Battle Of Amritsar:

During Shah Jahan's rule, the situation further deteriorated. Shah Jahan destroyed the water reservoir of Sikhs. The quarrels between Sikhs and Mogul officers were increasing in intensities. The arguments started over hawks but subsequently led to full scale battles and contributed to the deaths of thousands of persons on both sides.

Hearing of this quarrelsome incident of hawks, the angry Shah Jahan dispatched Mansubedar Mukhlis Khan with a force of 10,000 soldiers, "to teach a lesson" to Sri Guru Hargobind Ji. The Sikhs had 1,000 soldiers in total, Moguls outnumbering Sikhs by 10-1. This is the first major fight and experience Sikhs had as a joint force. Moguls attacked the mini fortress of Lohgarh, a small force of Sikhs were stationed there and provided a stiff resistance. However, the

attackers had an upper hand over the Sikhs on the first day of the battle. They looted and plundered all the property and the holy residence of Guru Sahib.



Guru Hargobind dispatches Mukhlis khan

The following morning, Sikh forces consolidated themselves and struck back and gave a devastating blow to the Mughal force. The general, Mukhlis Khan was captured by the Sikhs on two occasions and each time Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji gave orders to free the prisoner. Each time he attacked back with his force. Mukhlis Khan then challenged Guru Ji to a one on one fight, while the other soldiers looked on. The battle did not last very long. Guru Ji told Mukhlis Khan to attack first. Mukhlis Khan made three successive swings at Guru Ji and missed him due to Guru's agility. Finally, Guru Hargobind got his chance and he finished the job in single sword swing. Mukhlis Khan's body was cut into two pieces, as Mughal army looked in terror. The Mughals army fled the battle field and the battle ended in a complete Sikh victory, resulting in lifting the spirits of Shikhs and popularity of Guru Hargobind Ji. This was the first armed clash between the Mughals and the Sikhs was the first victory for Guru Hargobind.

Battle of Kartarpur

As follow up of the defeat at Amritsar, Kale Khan, the brother of Mukhlis Khan, was given the command of fifty thousand men by Mughal emperor. Qutub Khan, Painde Khan, Anwar Khan and Asman Khan were commissioned to fight under Kale Khan. At one time Pathan Painde Khan was a loyal friend to Guru Hargobind ji.

The first cavalry of Pathan were overpowered by the Sikhs. The Sikhs were fighting for their belief and religion. Bidhi Chand engaged Kale Khan and Guru's eldest son Gurditta engaged

Asman Khan. Even Teghh Mal (later on the ninth Guru) who was only fourteen years old showed feats of valor in the field earning the honorary addition to his name of Teghh Bahadur. Painde Khan with drawn sword confronted the Guru Hargobind hurling some adjectives. Mohsan Fani, a Muslim historian recaptures the Guru's response to once loyal friend as:

"Painde Khan, why use such words when the sword is in your hand. Brave as you are my child, come I give you full leave to strike first. I have no grudge against you. But you are full of anger. You can empty your rage by striking the first blow."

Hearing this, Painde Khan aimed a heavy blow at the Guru that was parried off. The Guru allowed him again to strike - also in vain. Infuriated with his double failure, he gave a third blow which also missed the Guru. The Guru then urged him:

"Come, my child, I will teach you how to strike. Not your way but this way."

After saying this he gave him such strong blow that Painde Khan fell to the ground mortally wounded. From this blow, he seemed to have regained his old sense of friendship. The Guru told him: Hey Musulman! Now is the time to repeat your "kalma" (creed) to that khan replied: **"O Guruji, your sword is my kalma and my source of salvation."** As his old friend Painde khan was dying, Guru's heart filled with pity and he placed his shield over his body to cover him and in salutation Guru said:

"Painde Khan, I cherished you, I respect you and cherished your friendship, and I made you a martyr. Although men spoke of your disloyalty, I forgive you and hold no grudge against you, I forgive all your failings, and nothing have entered in my mind against you; but destiny misled you so much that you brought an army against me. It is your own acts of ingratitude and insolence that have led to your death at my hands. I pray the Almighty to grant you a dwelling in heaven."

After all his chiefs were slain, Kale Khan, brother of slain Mukhlis Khan confronted the Guruji. He discharged number of arrows that Guruji missed but one arrow grazed the Guru's forehead, and showed the drops of blood on his face. He remarked, **"Kale Khan, I have seen your art of shooting. Now see mine."** At this he discharged an arrow which killed Kale Khan's horse. The Guru thought that time is reached for a point of honor for a dual "hand to hand" by dismounting his horse; he offered his adversary a choice of arms. The swords were chosen weapons for both sides. The Guruji fielded kale Khan's strokes first and commented, **"This is not way to strike a blow"** He then dealt Kale Khan a blow with his two-edged scimitar which severed his head from his body. Seeing this, the imperial army fled for their lives as Bidhi Chand and Jati Mal shouted slogans of victory. This battle cost Mughals several thousand Muslims who were dispatched to see their makers. The seven hundred brave Sikhs lost their lives in this battle. The battle and victory was scored on 1634 AD. It was sad that Painde Khan

was his childhood friend and Painde khan's mother was the nurse of Guru Hargobind. This was painful for him to see, his friend's betrayal and his death.

This apostle of holy war, Guru Hargobind breathed his last peacefully at Kiratpur, Punjab in March 1644 AD.

Tegh Bahadur and Aurangzeb

A sharp contrast emerged in Mughals' behavior during the time of Aurungzeb. Guru Tegh Bahdur was the ruling Guru then and was younger son of Guru Arjun Das. Prior to him, there were two Sikh Gurus who preceded him. Guru Tegh Bahadur was the 9th Guru of Sikhism.

At a later stage of the life, Guru Hargobind lived a strict and holy life and spent most of his time in meditation. He became Guru on April 1664, following his grand-nephew, Guru Har Krishnan. When he was 13 years old, he was called Tyag Mal Khatri. Tyag asked his father to accompany him into battle as his village was under attack by Mughal commander sent by Shah Jahan's governor of Punjab. The Battle of Kartarpur was held in 1635AD by the Mughal Empire and was the one of the major battle of Early Mughal-Sikh Wars. As part of a campaign against the "Sikhs of Guru Hargobind", the sixth Sikh Guru, a Mughal army led by Painde Khan laid siege to Kartarpur. Kartarpur was defended by Bhai Bidhi Chand, Guru Hargobind and his sons. The Mughal force was repulsed by the brave Sikhs and Mughals lost several commanders. During the battle, Tyag attacked the enemies rank and forced them to withdraw their position. He used his military training that he had learned. After the battle was won, (the Battle of Kartarpur) the victorious Sikhs returning home honored their new hero with a new 'warriors' name. So, Tyag Mal Ji was renamed Tegh Bahadur Ji (meaning "Brave or sharp sword wielder") The young Tegh Bahadur soon showed a bent in the direction of the earlier Sikhs Gurus. He was presented with a sword by Guru Hargobind. In his early age, Tegh Bahadur was trained in martial art and use of weaponry and horse riding. Guru Har Rai and Guru Har Kishan preceded Guru Hargobind.

Guru Har Kishan was seized with an illness during his visit to Delhi. When asked by his followers as to who would lead them after him, he replied Baba Bakala, meaning his successor was to be found in Bakala, the last home of Guru Hargobind. This ambiguity led some other family contenders to take advantage of the ambiguity. There were at least 22 who came forward from inner circle claiming they were from Bakala.

There is a mythical story of the merchant and his survival during the ocean journey and his pledge to donate the wealth to the Guru Har Kishan who had died due to small Pox infection. In any case, the end result was Tegh Bahadur was selected as other claimants dropped their

claims. The inter clan and succession struggle was not unique in Sikhism but present in all other religions and the kingdoms. The lust for power and acquisition of divinity is rooted in the human characters.

As stated earlier in my article on Shivaji, the Aurangzeb had various encounters with various power centers across India. We also stated without any reservation that Aurungzeb was a religious bigot and psychopath and under today's UN charter, he will be hauled to Geneva for committing genocide and human right violation. Of course, he is now part of the history and putting his life in proper perspective for students of the history is the only objective of this statement. However, the history always serves as a guide for the future and the people like him found showing a similar tendency anywhere in the planet should be extinguished without hesitation to spare countless innocent lives. A good example is ISIS of Iraq. The responsible world powers should not hesitate but act together.

https://www.academia.edu/7830995/Shivaji-Forgotten_Hero_of_India



Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh



Guru Gobind Singh (Zafar Nama)



Guru Arjan Dev Ji

Soon after the public announcement by Makhan Shah, that chosen Guru is Tegh Bahadur Singh and he would travel to Harmindar Sahib with a party of Sikhs followers and body guards to pay obeisance. When he arrived at this sacred shrine of the Gurus, Guru Tegh Bahadur was rebuffed by the Sodhi family who were in physical control of the Golden temple and he was not allowed to enter the main section of the complex but went as far as the Thara Sahib. The main entrance to Harmindar sahib was shut closed. The succession struggle caused the "Masand" (high priest) of Amritsar to first acknowledge elder brother Prithvi chand of

Guru Arjan to be their Guru. After this unexpected behavior, Tegh Bahadur ji went away and stayed in a nearby village of Walla in the humble dwelling of a peasant couple. The women of Amritsar deserved the credit for coming out in support of Guru Tegh Bahadur. This changed the equation for the entry to golden temple. Tegh Bahadur was highly pleased at the sincere devotion and courage of the women of Amritsar, Guru Tegh Bahadur ji said:

"Ever blessed by God is the women of Amritsar."

Aurangzeb was campaigning to turn the entire country of Hindustan to Islamic Mugalistan. All Rajputs, Sikhs, Jats, Marathas and every Hindu who can fight resisted that effort.



Harmindar sahib also known as Golden Temple Gurudwara Shrine at Amritsar, Punjab



Thara sahib in front of Golden Temple

The Sikh tradition confirms along with other historical documents from Royal Rajput archives that Aurangzeb was outright hostile to Hinduism. Simply put he was the “ISIS of today’s Iraq” with their hostilities towards all non-Muslims, and specifically from his attempt to convert the Hindus of Kashmir to Islam. Gian Singh provides a detailed version of this chapter his Tarikh- Guru Khalsa (1.7 [8]). He records how the Brahmins of Kashmir, confronted by the intimidation and threats from the Mughal governor, had gathered at the temple of Amaranth and were preparing to face death rather than accept the conversion. Suddenly there appeared before them a sage who urged them to seek the protection of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The advice was accepted and a delegation left for the Punjab. When they appeared before the Guru in Anandpura the Hindu delegation explained their predicament with much weeping and wailing. The delegate of 500 led by Kripa Ram addressed the Guru with their predicament:

'The river of Aurangzeb's brutality is engulfing the garden of Hindu dharma, they declared. It threatens to destroy it root and branch. Cows are everywhere being slaughtered. If any cow or buffalo belonging to a Hindu is mortally ill the Gazi comes and kills it on the spot. Muslims then flay it cut it in pieces and carry it away. This causes us much distress. If we fail to inform the Qazi when a beast is dying he punishes us, saying, why did you not tell me? Now its spirit has gone to hell, whereas had it been killed in the approved Muslim manner it would have

gone to paradise. These, together with the Jizya tax, are the kind of difficulties, which we have had to endure, and now it is their intention to convert us to Islam by force. We shall do whatever you say.'



Kashmiri Pandit seeking help of Guru Tegh Bahadur ji at Anandpura sahib

Pandit Kripa Ram also told the Guru the harrowing tales of torture initiated by the orders of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 AD) for converting them to Islam. Guru Ji was mentally occupied with the issue when the child Gobind Rai happened to be there and asked as to what was the bothering him ? Guru Ji replied with few words and told him that the sacrifice of a Great Soul is required. Child Gobind Rai (Next Guru) replied:"Who else there to serve this cause?" After giving some thought on his son's response: He replied to the delegation as follows:

He told the Brahmins to present the following challenge to Aurangzeb: 'Our master and guide is Tegh Bahadur of noble Kshatriya descent. If the emperor can persuade him to become a Muslim then we too shall convert to Islam. If, however, he refuses, then we should be freed from the obligation to do so.' The delegation left to deliver this message through governor of Punjab and Kashmir who was Zalim khan.

The Guru's challenge was duly communicated to Aurangzeb, who greeted it with unexpected response and gave orders for the Guru to be brought to Delhi with all honors. This, however,

was not in accordance with the Guru's own plans. He announced that he would make his own way to Delhi and Aurangzeb, having been assured that the Guru's word could be trusted; Aurangzeb gave his permission to do so. Joyfully he told the Brahmins to present the following challenge to Aurangzeb: '**Our master and guide is Tegh Bahadur of noble Kshatriya descent. If the emperor can persuade him to become a Muslim then we too shall convert to Islam. If, however, he refuses, then we should be freed from the obligation to do so.**' The delegation hastened with all possible speed to present this message to Zalim Khan, Governor of the Punjab.

The Guru's challenge was duly communicated to Aurangzeb, who greeted it with expectant pleasure and gave orders for the Guru to be conducted to Delhi with all honor. This, however, was not in accordance with the Guru's own plans. He announced that he would make his own way to Delhi and Aurangzeb, having been assured that the Guru's word could be trusted so Aurungzeb gave his permission. Gian Singh's account informs us that Guru Tegh Bahadur followed a circuitous route, visiting his Gurudwara and Sangat (Sangha) along the way. Eventually he reached Agra as shown below in his journey.

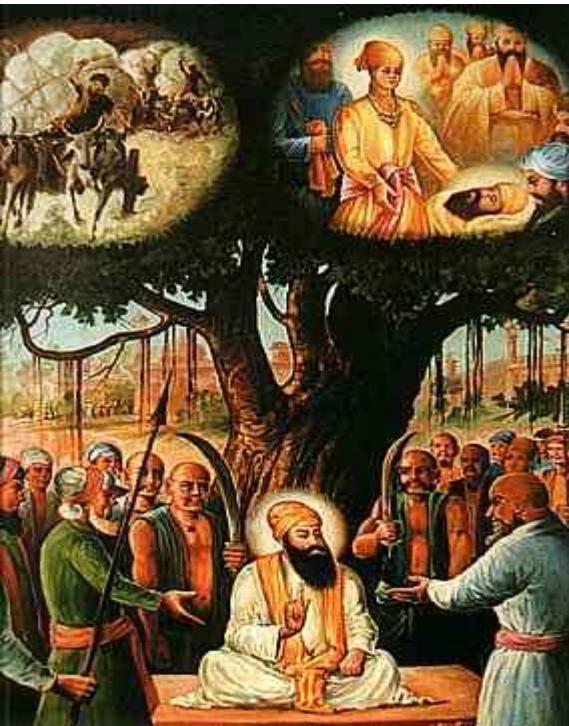
During his travel Tegh Bahadur Ji preached at various places of worships just like other Gurus. Upon reaching Agra, he sent his seal ring and shawl with a disciple to a market to fetch some food from Sikh followers. The Kotwal (chief of Police) found out and reported to mogul court and Aurangzeb the presence of Sikh Guru.

Emperor Aurungzeb wanted every Hindu to adapt to Islam and Hindu kings were resisting it. (See scathing letter from Jay Singh-I of Jaipur to Aurungzeb. All the moves Aurungzeb made by introducing Zejiya tax on Hindu and other overt acts of harassment and discrimination empowered Maratha and weakened Mughal power. It also produced the same result that leads to Mughal-Sikh war and rise of Raja Ranjit singh and Sikh empire that we will deal in another article.

Aurungzeb unwisely commanded and ordered Kotwal to produce him to his court in Delhi. Guruji found this odd as he was on his way to Delhi anyway and his safety was guaranteed by Aurungzeb himself. Aurangzeb had tried to convert many Hindus to Islam with the hope that the rest will follow.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was brought in an iron cage to Delhi with intent for a dialogue that turned into intimidation and threat. He had to face the Aurangzeb's tyranny. Aurangzeb sent a message to him that if he accepted Islam, he will pardon him. Guruji' reply was that" **his**

religion was to defend the mankind and that cannot be changed.” Mullah and Ulema were used to persuade him but to no avail. Guru will not budge



Guru Tegh Bahadur's Travel to preach

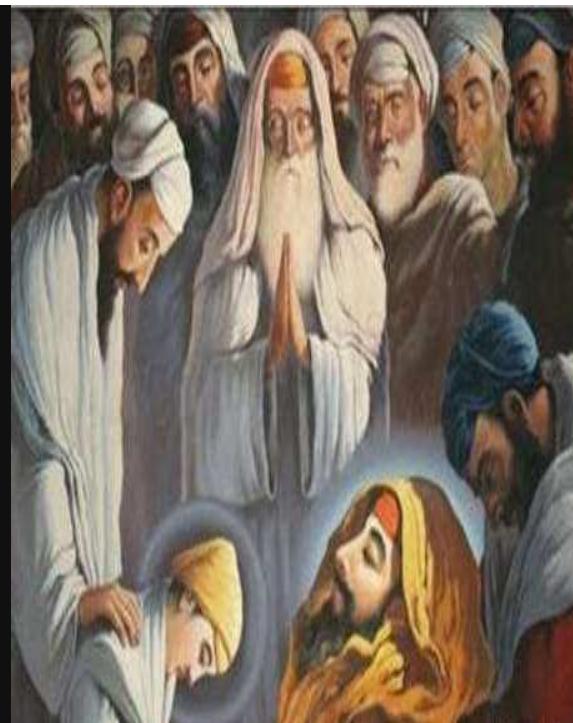
Kotwal of Agra catches him and brings him to Aurungzeb

He was beheaded in 1675 AD by a Saiyyids Jalalu Din of Samana village (a Pathan with no morality) in public square of Delhi. The Sis Ganj Gurudwara was built on that spot. Jaita Singh brought the Guru's head to Anandpura Sahib to Guru Gobind Rai and Lakhi Shah who cremated the body by setting fire to his house. Gurudwara Rakab Ganj stands at the cremation spot.

After these dreadful acts, the conflict with the Mughals rose on the political grounds and developed into a military conflict. After a spirited resistance and a series of victories the Sikhs like Maratha were finally subdued.



Guru Tegh Bahadur in a cage in Delhi



His head was brought to home for cremation



Sis Ganj Gurudwara



Rabak Ganj Gurudwara

Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh was born Gobind Rai; (December 1666 – October 1708) was the ninth of the ten Sikh Gurus, the eleventh guru being the living perpetual Guru, Guru Granth Sahib (the sacred text of Sikhism). He was a warrior, poet and philosopher. He succeeded his father Guru Tegh Bahadur as the leader of Sikhs at the young age of nine. He contributed much to Sikhism; notable was his contribution to the formalization of the Sikh faith that the first Guru Nanak had founded, as a renaissance religion during the 15th century AD. Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the living Sikh Guru, initiated the concept of Sikh Khalsa in 1699 AD, passing the Guruship of the Sikhs to the Tenth and Eternal Guru of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth Sahib.

The small tract of Anandpura did not produce enough agriculture to sustain the large number of followers who can volunteer for duties and financial contribution. Sikh Guru needed large number of mercenaries to withstand the fight against mighty Mughals. The offerings and donations of the devotees from Punjab were confiscated by the corrupt Priests. The fighting men required arms, horses and foods and lack of that will contribute random looting by not so thoughtful Pathan mercenaries. The Guruji' mercenaries looted the nearby villages of Kahlur state and terrorized the hill people. These acts aroused Hindu Raja's wrath and Sikh followers and Raja demanded an explanation from the Guru. Apprehensive of what the Raja might do in collaboration with Mughals; Guru Govind decided to leave Anandpura sahib to relocate. At this time the nearby Raja of Sirmaur invited the Guru to reside in his territory and gave him a grant of land (the modern Paonta Sahib). The Sirmaur Raja was eager to have such a spiritual and military ally against his hereditary enemies, the Rajas of Kahlur and Garhwali. Thereafter securing the pledge from Sirmaur and avoid prolonged siege of Anandpur sahib by hostile forces with food and ammunition depleting, Guru Gobind Singh and 400 Sikhs left Sri Anandpur Sahib during the cold and rainy night of December 1704 AD.

The Mughals army offered Guru Gobind a safe passage to leave Anandpur Sahib on an oath sworn on the Quran, an oath that had been signed by emperor Aurangzeb, as well as, an oath swore on the cow which Rajput-Hindu consider sacred. The Guru and his Sikhs were attacked by the Mughal army, breaking their oath of assuring safe conduct.

In the confusion that followed during the cold and darkness, Mughals surprised Sikhs and broke their pledge and many Sikhs became martyrs. Guru Sahib and Guru Sahib's family crossed the river stream in the heat of the battle. The number of Sikhs perished attempting to cross the frigid waters of the river. During this confusion, the Guru's mother and his two youngest sons got separated from the Khalsa forces. The forty out of initial 400 that left

Anandpur sahib survived in addition to Guru and two of his eldest sons. Gurudwara Parivar Vichara has been built on the spot of the battle, during which the Guru's mother and his two youngest sons got separated from the band of Sikhs that were later united with Guru.



Guru Gobind crossing the river at Sarsa



Guru Gobind inspecting superior Mughal army

However, Mughal's 'Holy' oaths on Quran proved to be meaningless as they lost little time betraying their promises to Guru Gobind almost as soon as the Sikhs had left the safety of their impregnable fortress. This defines the characteristics of these people.

Guru Govind initially showed anathema for the creed of Aurangzeb and would fine his followers 125 Rupees for bowing before the tomb of any Muslim saint! Masands (Priests) were appointed by the Gurus to collect offerings of devotees from different towns and villages; the posts soon became hereditary. The word is a corruption of the Persian title "Masnad-e-ala", which was given to nobles under the Delhi Sultans. However, much of this collection was diverted for personal use by Masands.

In Persian the word "Khalis" means pure, but in the Indian context "Khalsa" referred to anything not associated with the Mughal Emperors. Thus even after establishing the Khalsa Panth the Guru accepted the authority of the Mughal Emperors.

There were a more practical element in the conflict between the Guru and the Mughal officials in the Punjab, and that were the Zejiya tax and the ownership of the holy sites of the Sikh in the empire and acceptance of Guru as sole sovereign of those sites that Aurangzeb will not grant.

Aurungzeb was a Persian scholar and a good writer in spite of his evil genius and bigotry. One of his letters to his son Bahadur Shah, governor of Kabul, reads:

"I learn...that nearly 20,000 Hindus, who call themselves the Khalsa of Govind the follower of Nanak, had assembled and gone to the country of the Barakzai (in N.W. Pakistan) and that

the Afghans of the neighborhood had fallen on them, so that the party had been killed or drowned. The Emperor orders that the prince (Bahadur Shah) should imprison these misbelievers, and expel them from that district." Hearing these complaints again and again and knowing open defiance of Sikh Gurus to Aurangzeb, he decided to dispatch Mughal army.

Battle Of Chamkaur(Chamakpur)

The Battle of Chamkaur or also known as Battle of Chamkaur Sahib was a battle fought between the Khalsa led by Guru Gobind Singh against the Mughal forces led by Wazir Khan. Guru Gobind Singh makes a reference to this battle in the Zafarnama. Guru writes in his letter how a large number of Mughal troops attacked his men. Despite giving assurance of safe conduct, the Mughals soldiers were looking for Guru Gobind Singh. After learning that the party of Sikhs had taken shelter in the Haveli, they laid siege upon it after Guruji left Anandpura sahib.

The Mughals forces have been described as numbering over several hundred thousand while the Guru was only accompanied by body guard of 400 Sikhs when he left Anandpur Sahib. The actual battle is said to have taken place outside a Mud Fort (Kachi Grahi) where Guru was resting. The negotiations for surrender and safe conduct broke down as Sikh soldiers chose to engage the numerically superior Mughal forces, thus asking their Guru to escape. It is said that a "Gurmatta" (consensus) among the Sikhs compelled Guru Gobind Singh Ji to obey the will of the "Panj Piyare" and leave by cover of night. (In Sikhism, "Panj Piyare" holds the authority to issue commands relating to all temporal matters of the Sikh religion. On December 7, 1705, at first light, officers of the Mughal army, Khawaja Muhammad and Nahar Khan, sent a messenger with terms of treaty demanding submission to Islamic law, which the Guru, his sons and valiant warriors unanimously declined. Ajit Singh reacted with outrage and asked Guruji the emissary be silent permanently and his heads are returned to Mughals.



Ajit Singh (son of Guruji) with his soldiers



Guru Govind accompanying Ajit at Fort

The Mughal Turk officers ordered the attack on Sikhs violating the oath. Two Mughal officers, Nahar Khan and Ghairat Khan, and many of their soldiers died attempting to breach the Mud Fortress. The Sikh warriors' heroic martyrdom held back the enemy hordes and prevented all out invasion of the fortress. All the Sikhs guarding the Guru were killed in the battle except the 3 who left with the Guru.

Battle of Muktsar:

The Mughals hastily chased after the Guru once they realized he had escaped. Guru Gobind Singh made a last stand against the Mughals at Muktsar. At the same time, Aurangzeb had started to sue for peace. The Battle of Muktsar was the last battle fought by Guru Gobind Singh, where the pursuing Mughal army was decisively defeated. The Battle of Muktsar took place in 1705 AD, following the siege of Anandpur and Chamkaur.

The employment of fresh troops in order to maintain the momentum of attack against an exhausted and bruised Mughal army by Sikh invariably causes headaches and disorganization and at times it hopelessly demoralized him. Only a 300 plus strong Sikh cavalry contingent for fresh troops attacked a thirsty and exhausted Mughal army numbering 16,000. This had a dramatic effect on the outcome of the battle. Some 250 soldiers of the Khalsa engaged an enemy of 20,000 strong for the whole day. The enemy no doubt put each one to death, but in the bargain left approximately four thousand Mughal troops dead or wounded in the a day long battle.

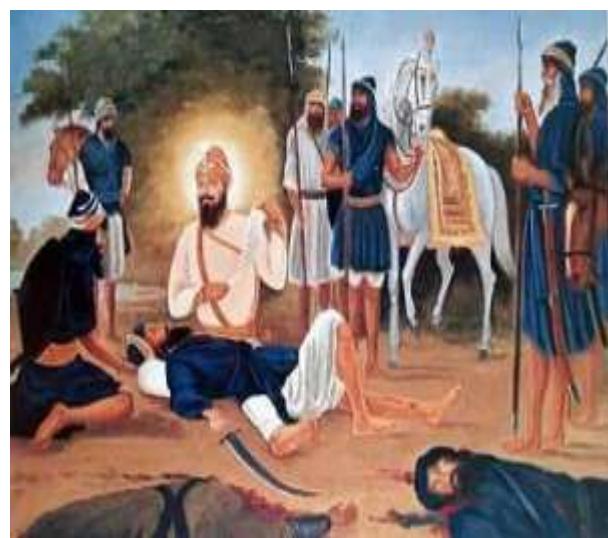
The 40 men who had pledged their life to Guru were led by the great female general Mai Bhago and brought such damage onto the Mughal force of 10 000 strong, they had no option but to retreat. At the end of the battle, when Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was looking for survivors, Mai Bhago, who was lying wounded, greeted him. She told him how the forty had valiantly laid down their lives fighting in the battlefield. Guru Gobind was greatly moved by the loyalty, remorse, self-sacrifice, and heroism. Mai Bhago recovered and remained in the Guru's presence after the battle of Muktsar. After the defeat of the enemy at the battle of Muktsar, the Mughals realized the futility of their efforts and became so badly demoralized that they altogether gave up. Automatically, hostility towards Guru Sahib Ji and the Khalsa army vanished never to resurface again as long as Guru ji himself was alive.

Similarly Zafarnama sent to Aurangzeb was written in Persian by the 9th Guru Gobind singh, while maintaining a spirited tone, he did not talk of overthrowing the Mughals. He chastises Aurangzeb for lacking a sense of justice and complains of the treachery and cruelty of Wazir

Khan. The Guru is at pains to point out that his religion is different from that of the Rajas and that he himself was not an idol worshipper. This could have been a tactical move to gain Aurangzeb's sympathy. The Guru's primary objective was to ensure the safety of his own followers. In the same manner the first duty of the Kahlur Raja was to protect his subjects from the violence and depredations of outsiders that he did not fulfill.



Gurudwara stands at the battle site



Guru Gobind comforting wounded

The historians considered Zafarnama as a letter of defiance by Guru Gobind singh and were delivered to the distrustful and barbaric Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 AD. It was composed by Guru Gobind Singh in one of the darkest times for the Sikhs. Guru Gobind lost four of his sons, and most of his Sikhs contingent at the bloody battle at Chamkaur. The letter praises God and then outlines the treacherous deeds of Aurangzeb and the Mughal Generals who broke their oath on Quran not to attack the Sikhs.(see Appendix-1 for Zafar Nama)

In response to the Guru's Zafarnama, Aurangzeb expressed his wish for a personal meeting with the Guru. The Guru left for the Deccan in October 1706 AD to meet Aurangzeb. He passed through what is now Rajasthan, on his way to Ahmednagar, where the Emperor was encamped in his war with Shivaji's forces. At Baghor, he received the news of Aurangzeb's death in March 1707 AD, and so no need for further travel and returned to Punjab, via Shahjahanabad.

Bahadur Shah, successor to Aurungzeb followed up and invited Guru Gobind Singh for a meeting which took place at Agra in July 1707 AD. The Guru was received with honor and was given the title of Hind Ka Pir (the Saint of India). The Guru stayed with the Emperor in Agra till

November 1707 AD. He made Dholpur, a center of his missionary activities, and toured nearby areas for many days. He accompanied Bahdur Khan on his way to Rajputana and south but was not happy with Bahadur's reliance of Wazir Khan so he parted the company with emperor. Wazir Khan, the Nawab of Sirhind, felt uneasy about the reconciliation between Guru Gobind Singh and Mughal Bahadur Shah I. Wazir Khan commissioned two mercenaries Pathan to assassinate the Guru Gobind. The two secretly pursued the Guru and got an opportunity to attack him at Nanded. According to the writer, Senapati of "Sri Gur Sabha", one of the Pathan Jamshed Khan stabbed the Guru in the left side below the heart while he was resting in his chamber. Guru Gobind Singh killed the attacker with his sword, while the attacker's companion tried to flee but was killed by Sikhs body guard who rushed to the scene hearing the noise. The European surgeon sent by Bahadur Shah stitched the Guru's wound. However, the wound re-opened and caused profuse bleeding, as the Guru tugged at a hard strong bow after a few days.



Takht Hazur Sahib, Nanded, where attack took place Recovery of Guru Gobind with help of English surgeon

Banda Singh Bahadur (1670 – 1716 AD) and Farrukhsiyar:

Banda Singh Bahadur was born most likely in Rajput family in 1670 AD. We suspect that his ancestors migrated from Mewar when Rana Pratap's successor sued for peace and settled in South India like many others. His real Rajput name was Lachhman Dev. As a Rajput, he was trained as a warrior and hunter.

The life took a turn during a hunting incident, he renounced worldly life and became a "Vairagi Sadhu" or a "Wandering Hermit" and ultimately settled near the place called Nander on the banks of River Godavari in Maharashtra. He won great fame as a magician under the name of "Madho Das". Guru Gobind Singh met him during one of his journeys and invited him

to visit him. Guru encouraged him to give up his present way of wondering monk and resume the duties of a real Rajput warrior. In few days after Banda's arrival , the Guru held a durbar, conferred the title of Banda Bahadur on him and appointed him his military lieutenant to punish the Governor of Sirhind who had killed his two youngest sons, and was mainly responsible for the death of his two elder sons, his mother and thousands of Sikhs and Hindus. He was given a council of advisers of five Sikhs who on their arrival in Punjab were to assure the Sikhs that Banda was Guru's nominee and deputy to organize them in order to lead an expedition against Sirhind. There is differing account as to where the title was confirmed to Banda. Was it at Anandpur Sahib or a place in South where he met Banda? The author believes that this happened at Anandpur sahib. Guru obviously did not go as far as Godavari in his previous travels except when he accompanied Bahadur shah and he would not commit the error in recruiting him in front of Bahdur Shah.



Banda Bahadur Singh

An edict called "Hukumnamah" or a letter of authority in the handwriting of the Guru Gobind was provided, instructing Sikhs to join Banda Bahadur in his national war against Mughal. As an insignia of his temporal authority invested in him, Guru Gobind gave Banda Bahadur his own sword, green bow and five arrows from his quiver. Three hundred Sikh cavaliers in battle readiness to accompany Banda to a distance of 16 miles to give him final send off.

As seen before, the guru was severely wounded by a Pathan attack commissioned by Wazir Khan with the connivance of the court nobles and perhaps blessing by Bahadur Shah-1. The Guru passed away on October 7, 1708 AD due to fatal injury. Banda had not gone far when he heard the sad news. This did not discourage him. On the contrary it doubled his spirit and set the fire of vengeance of years of misery inflicted on Hindu by Turks.

Bahadur Shah-I hearing the news of Banda and his arrival in Punjab got upset and considered that an open defiance of the authority of the Mughal Emperor that Guru Gobind had acquiesced. That forced Guru's family to declare officially their disapproval and ex-communicated him but indirectly supported him through their followers. Banda collected the dispersed Sikh bands and attacked Sirhind in 1710 AD to take revenge on Wazir Khan. Banda was eventually defeated and was forced to take shelter in Sirmaur. Banda moved from place to place in the hills seeking military aid and reemerged at Pathankot and Gurdaspur, collected more fighters, and once again attacked Sirhind. Banda Singh was soon joined by thousands of Sikhs in his crusade against the wicked rulers. Within a short span of time, Sikhs under Banda Singh's leadership put an end to life of many tyrant rulers, including Nawab Wazir Khan, the main culprit behind death of younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh.

Banda Singh captured large part of Punjab and established Sikh rule there. He also minted coins in the name of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh. In the meantime, Farrukhsiyar became Delhi's emperor. Angered by defeat at the hands of Banda Singh and Sikh forces, he sent a large force from Delhi and mobilized from elsewhere in Punjab to defeat and capture Banda Singh. Banda was finally overcome in 1716 AD by the Punjab Mughal commander Abdus Samad Khan that is narrated below. Banda's followers formed a separate sect of their own called the Bandai Sikhs.

Muntakhabu-l-Lubab by Mohammad Hasim Khafi khan provides additional details:

“ Muhammad Farrukhsiyar, who reigned from 1713 to 1715 AD experienced the War between the Sikhs and Mughals and Mughals and Maratha periodically during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries AD as the Sikhs gained increasing power and influence in the Punjab; a power the Mughals struggled to curtail, given the strategic and economic importance of Punjab.”

Khafi khan further narrates the struggle of Banda singh:

“The violence of the Sikhs under Banda singh passed all bounds. The injuries and indignities they inflicted on Musulmans, and the destruction of mosques and tombs, were looked upon by them as righteous meritorious acts. They had built a fort at Gurdaspur in the Punjab, ten or twelve days' journey from Dehli, and extended its limits so that fifty or sixty thousand horse and foot could find [p. 68] protection. They strengthened the towers and walls of the place, took possession of all the cultivated land around and ravaged the country from Lahore to Sirhind. Abdu-s Samad Khan Diler Jang was appointed Subedar of Lahore, and was sent with a select army and artillery. Abdu-s Samad engaged the vast army of the Banda Guru near his fort. The infidels fought so fiercely that the army of Islam was nearly overpowered; and they over and over again showed the greatest daring. Great numbers were killed on both sides; but Mughal valor at length prevailed, and the Infidels were defeated and driven to their stronghold. The infidels on several occasions showed the greatest boldness and daring, and made nocturnal attacks upon the Imperial forces. Abdu-s Samad Dilir Jang, while lying in front of their Poor fortress, was obliged to throw up an entrenchment for the defense of his force. He raised batteries; and pushed forward his approaches. The siege lasted a long time, and the enemy exhibited great courage and daring. They frequently made sallies into the trenches, and killed many of the besiegers. To relate all the struggles and exertions of Abdu-s Samad and his companions in armies are hard to relate here but it is suffice it to say that the royal army in course of time succeeded in cutting off from the enemy his supplies of corn and fodder, and the stores in the fort were exhausted. Sikhs were surrounded by large number of Mughal forces led by Abdu-s Samad Khan Diler Jang in the fortress of Gurdas Nagal. They fought valiantly under Banda Singh's command. They fought valiantly but due to depleting ration, they ultimately became too weak to fight with the enemies. Abdu-s-Samad cut the heads the four thousand Sikh martyrs in the fight. The brave general Banda Singh Bahadur asked for pardon but was told that he has to receive them from the emperor. Banda was arrested along with several hundred Sikh soldiers and brought to Delhi, after eight months. Inside the fortress, Sikhs were almost starved to the death. Sikhs were offered amnesty by Mughals in lieu of accepting Islam. Not even a single Sikh betrayed the spirit of Sikhism and embraced Islam. The Sikhs were tortured and killed publicly. After an ordeal of about three months, Bahadur Banda Singh was killed in one of the gruesome manners of human indignity in the history of mankind. On June 9, 1716 AD, his four year old son Ajay Singh was put to death in front of him. His liver was forced into Banda Singh's mouth, and even this act failed to break his resolve and determination. Finally, Banda was put to death mercilessly by piercing the flesh from his body, bit by bit, with means of hot pincers. His eyes were pulled out and his feet were chopped off.”

In spite of this oppression and cruelties, the Sikh resistance never dies out. Several Khalsa leaders followed along with Maratha to put an end to Mughal Empire. With the martyrdom of several Sikhs soldiers, within ninety years, Maharaja Ranjit Singh establishes a largest Sikh kingdom, no earlier Guru ever dreamed off. This history should be a reminder of India's great Heroes who have fought valiantly against Islam to preserve their religion and way of life.

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Appendix-1 “Zafarnama”- English translation from Gurumukhi
A Letter from Guru Gobind to Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb

O Master of miracles, O Eternal and Beneficent One,
O The Provider of our sustenance, O our Deliverer, Bestower of Grace and Mercy! (1)

O Giver of Bliss, O Great Pardon, Who holds me by the Hand,
O Remitter of sins, O Bestower of daily bread, O Charmer of our hearts! (2)

O King of kings, O Giver of Good, O guidance of the Way.
O One without colour, without form, without equal! (3)

He who has no material possessions, no army, no ground to stand upon,
Him too, Thou blessest with Heavenly Bliss. (4)

Separate from the world, yet most powerful, the Presence, Who givest Thy gifts as if Thou wert here before us.
(5)

O Thou Pure One, Our Cherisher, our only Giver.
O Thou Merciful One, who givest to every land! (6)

O Greatest of the great, Thou art the God of every land:
Of Perfect Beauty, Merciful and Giver of sustenance! (7)

O Master of intellect, O Embellisher of the meek,
O Refuge of the poor, O Destroyer of the tyrant! (8)

O Protector of the faith, Fountain of eloquence,
O Knower of the Real, O Author of revelation! (9)

O Master of intelligence, O Appreciator of Wisdom,
O Diviner of secrets, O Omnipresent God! (10)

Thou knowest all that happens in the world,
and Thou resolvest all its problems and doubts. (11)

O Thou all-knowing God, O Great One,
Thou alone art the organizer of our lives. (12)

The Memorandum to Aurangzeb
I have no faith in thy oaths,
Even if thou bringest in God as thy witness. (13)

I haven't even an iota of trust in thee,
For, all thy ministers and thy courtiers are liars. (14)

He who puts faith in thy oath on the Koran,
He in the end, comes to ruin. (15)

But, beware that the insolent crow
Can lay not its hands upon one whose protection is Huma, the Bird of Heaven. (16)

He who seeks the refuge of the tiger
Can he be harmed by a goat, a deer or a buffalo? (17)

Had I vowed even secretly on the book of my faith,
I would have withdrawn infantry and cavalry from the field. (18)

And, what could my forty men do (at Chamkaur), when a hundred thousand men, unawares, pounced upon them? (19)

The oath breakers attacked them, of a sudden, with swords, arrows and guns. (20)

I had, perforce to join battle with thy hosts,
And I too fought with the muskets and arrows as best as I could. (21)

When an affair is past every other remedy,
It is righteous, indeed to unsheathe the sword. (22)

Hadn't I taken thee to thy word upon the Koran,
I wouldn't have chosen the path I did. (23)

I knew not that thy men were crafty and deceitful like a fox.
Else I wouldn't have driven myself to this state. (24)

He who swears to me on the Koran
Ought not to have killed or imprisoned my men. (25)

Thy army dressed like blue bottles,
Charged us, of a sudden, with a loud bang. (26)

But, he who advanced from thy ranks beyond his defences
Was hit with such deadly aim of my single arrow that he was deluged in blood. (27)

**But they who aggressed not against us
Were left unhurt, unmolested by us. (28)**

**When I witnessed thy general, Nahar Khan, advancing for war,
I gave him the taste of a single deadly arrow. (29)**

**And many of his men who boasted of their valor,
Fled the battlefield, in utter shame. (30)**

**Then advanced another one of Afghan blood,
Rushing forth like flood, like a gun-ball, or a deadly arrow. (31)**

**He made many assaults with great courage,
Some with conscious skill, and others like mad. (32)**

**The more he attacked, the more he was mauled,
And then while killing two of my ranks,
He, too, fell dead in the cold dust. (33)**

**But the cowardly and contemptible Khawaja came not forth like a man,
And hid himself behind a wall. (34)**

**Had I but seen his face,
I couldn't but have helped him too with an arrow. (35)**

**At last, many on their side fell on the ground
Hit by the arrows and the death dealing bullets. (36)**

**There was, indeed, an overpowering rain of these,
And the earth turned red like the lalla flower. (37)**

**Torn heads and legs lay in heaps,
As if the earth was covered with balls and sticks. (38)**

**The arrows whizzed, the bows twanged,
And, it brought forth from the earth only cries and yells. (39)**

**There were other dreadful, vengeful noises too, of weapons and men,
When men, bravest of the brave, battled like mad. (40)**

**But, what kind of chivalry is this in war,
That countless hosts should pounce upon a mere forty of us, (41)**

**When the lamp of the world veiled itself,
And the queen of night came forth with all her splendor. (42)**

**He who trusts, however, in an oath on God,
His Protection also in He; in need, He shows the Path. (43)**

**So, not even a hair of mine was touched, nor my body suffered,
For the God, the Destroyer of my enemies, Himself pulled me out to safety. (44)**

**I knew not that you, O man, were a perjurer,
And a worshipper of self, and a breaker of faith. (45)**

**Nay, you keep no faith, nor mind religion,
Nor know God, nor believe in Mohammed. (46)**

**He who observes the tenants of his faith,
He makes a promise but never to break it. (47)**

**You have no idea of what an oath on the Koran is:
Nay, you have no faith in the One God. (48)**

**Now if you were to swear a hundred times on the Koran,
I'd regard not thy word, not an iota of it. (49)**

**Had you ever a mind to keep thy faith,
You would have taken courage and come to me. (50)**

**From when you gave your word,
Swearing in the name of God's Word, it was incumbent on you to keep your faith. (51)**

**If your majesty were to be present here before me,
I would have with all my heart posted you with your treachery. (52)**

**Do now what is enjoined upon you,
And stick to your written and plighted word. (53)**

**The written word and the verbal promise of your envoy,
Both, should have been fulfilled by you. (54)**

**He alone is a man who keeps his word:
Not that he has one thing in the heart, and another on the tongue. (55)**

**Your promise was to honor the Qazi's word,
If that be true, then come thou to me. (56)**

**If you want to seal thy promise on the Koran,
I would send the document for sure to thee. (57)**

**If only you were gracious enough to come to the village of Kangar,
We could then see each other face to face. (58)**

**On the way, there will be no danger to your life,
For, the whole tribe of Brars accepts my command. (59)**

Come to me that we may converse with each other,
And I may utter some kind words to thee. (60)

I'd send thee a horseman like one in a thousand,
Who will conduct the safe to my home. (61)

I'm a slave of the King of kings,
And ready to obey His Call with all my heart. (62)

If He were to order me thus,
I'd with utmost pleasure present myself to thee. (63)

And if you are a believer in One God,
Tarry not in what I ask you to do. (64)

It is incumbent upon you to recognize the God,
For He told you not to create strife in the world. (65)

You occupy the throne, in the name of God, the Sovereign of all creation,
But strange is thy justice, stranger thy attributes! (66)

What sense of discrimination is this? What regard for religion?
O fie on such a sovereignty! Fie a hundred times!! (67)

Stranger than strange are thy decrees, O king,
But beware that broken pledges boomerang on those who make them. (68)

Shed not recklessly the blood of another with thy sword,
Lest the Sword on High falls upon thy neck. (69)

O man, beware and fear thy God,
For, though flattery or cajolery He can be deceived not. (70)

He, the King of kings, fears no one,
And is the True Sovereign of the earth and heaven. (71)

God is the Master of the earth and the sky:
He is the Creator of all men, all places. (72)

He it is who Creates all - from the feeble ant to the powerful elephant,
And is the Embellisher of the meek and Destroyer of the reckless. (73)

His name is: "Protector of the meek".
And Himself He is dependent upon no one's support or obligation. (74)

He has no twist in Him, nor doubt.
And, He shows man the Way to Redemption and Release. (75)

You are bound, indeed by your word on the Koran,
Let, therefore, the matter come to a good end, as is your promise. (76)

It is but meeting that you act wisely,
And be discreet in all that you do. (77)

What, if you have killed my four tender sons,
When I, like a coiled snake remain behind. (78)

It is not brave to put out a few sparks,
And stir up a fire to rage all the more! (79)

What a beautiful thought has Firdausi, the sweet-tongued poet, expressed:
“He who acts in haste, plays the devil”. (80)

When you and I will, both repair to the Court of God,
You will bear witness to what you did unto me. (81)

But, if you will forget even this,
Then, God on High will also forget you from His Mind. (82)

God will reward you well for your misdeed,
Which you launched with all your recklessness! (83)

This is the keeping of faith: this act of goodness,
To put God above the love of life. (84)

I believe not that you know God,
Since, from you have come only tyrannous acts. (85)

The Beneficent God also will know thee not,
And will welcome not thee with all thy riches. (86)

If now you swear a hundred times on the Koran,
I will not trust you even for a moment. (87)

I will enter not your presence, nor travel on the same road,
Even if you so ordain, I would oblige you not. (88)

O Aurangzeb, king of kings, fortunate is you,
An expert swordsman and a horseman too: (89)

Handsome is your person and your intellect high,
Master of the lands, ruler and emperor. (90)

A skilled wielder of the sword and clever in administration,
A master-warrior and a man of charitable disposition. (91)

You grant riches and lands in charity,
O one of handsome body and brilliant mind. (92)

Great is your munificence, in war you are like a mountain,
Of angelic disposition, your splendor is like that of Pleiades. (93)

You are the king of kings, ornament of the throne of the world:
Master of the world, but far from religion! (94)

I warred with the idol-worshipping hill chiefs,
For, I am the breaker of idols and them their worshippers. (95)

Beware, the world keeps not faith with any:
He who rises also falls and comes to grief. (96)

And look also at the miracle that is God,
That He may destroy a whole host through a single man! (97)

What can an enemy do to him whose friend is God?
For the function of the Great Bestower is: To Bestow. (98)

He grants Deliverance and shows also the Way.
And He teaches the tongue to utter His praises, in love. (99)

In the time of need, He blinds the enemy,
And protects the helpless from all injury and harm. (100)

And he who acts in good faith,
On him, the Merciful One, rains His Mercy. (101)

He who serves Him with all his heart,
God blesses him with the Peace of Soul. (102)

What harm can an enemy do to him,
On whom is the Please of God, our Supreme Guide. (103)

The Creator-Lord is ever his refuge, even if tens of thousands
of hosts were to proceed against him. (104)

If you have the pride of your army and riches,
I bank upon the Praise of God, the Almighty. (105)

You are proud of your empire and material possessions,
while I am proud of the Refuge of God, the Immortal. (106)

Be not heedless: for the world lasts but a few days,
And man may leave it, one knows not when. (107)

**Look at the ever changing faithless world:
And see what happens to every house, every denizon. (108)**

**If you are strong, torture not the weak,
And thus lay not the axe to thy empire. (109)**

**If the One God is one's Friend, what harm can the enemy do,
Even if he multiplies himself a hundred times? (110)**

**A thousand times let an enemy assault him,
And yet touch not even a hair on his head. (111)**